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An ENQUIRY concerning the ORIGINAL of the
SCOTS *in BRITAIN.*

By Dr. BARNARD, Bishop of KILLALOE, M. R. I. A.
and F. R. S.

THE original of that portion of the inhabitants of Britain properly called Scots, has been a point of history so established by the concurrence of all writers on that subject, both native and foreign, from venerable Bede down to Sir George MacKenzie, that, for a period of at least nine hundred years, it was never esteemed matter of question, until some late Scottish antiquarians, anxious to support an hypothesis, inconsistent with their own annals and tradition, have thought proper wholly to reject the received opinion of their ancestors on this head, and to offer to the public in its place an entire new system of their own, founded on arguments of probability, sufficiently plausible and ingenious, but unsupported by written testimonies, or any authentic documents whatsoever.

Read March
20, 1786.

HAVING read with some degree of attention what has been produced in this controversy on both sides of the question, and compared it as well with the antient histories of the Scots and Irish, as with the evidence of such foreign writers as make mention of them, I am of opinion that a system may be formed from these materials equally consistent with probability and written authority, which rather tends to reconcile than to subvert the arguments of both parties, and is at the same time supported by as convincing evidence as truth at this distance of time is capable of receiving.

It appears to be highly probable that the North of Ireland might have been originally peopled from the adjacent parts of Caledonia, as the Scottish antiquarians assert, and that the Southern inhabitants of the island might have derived their origin from their neighbours in South Britain (perhaps from the Belgæ and Danonii, whose posterity in Ireland were called Firbolgs and Tuatha de Danan): I am, therefore, ready to admit that the Irish might have been the children, rather than the parents of the antient Caledonians.

BUT this concession, as to the first population of Ireland, has no tendency to invalidate the history of a certain Milesian Dynasty having in process of time invaded and obtained the dominion of the country without extirpating the antient natives; for have not the Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans in Britain, and the English in Ireland, since done the same? But no one I believe has been so absurd as to infer that either of these kingdoms was peopled as well as subdued by the invaders.

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It is equally an error to suppose that the Irish chronicles derive the blood of their whole nation from those Milesians; for none but their princes and the spreading branches of their posterity pretend to trace their families from this honourable source.

If genealogies had been preserved in England with the same attention as they were in Ireland, we should probably be astonished to find as many of our fellow-subjects, now in poverty and obscurity, with royal blood flowing in their veins, in one country as in the other. Whoever has read the short history of the line of Plantagenet, published towards the beginning of this century, will be sensible of the truth of this observation. But the Irish genealogical tables which are still extant carry intrinsic proofs of their being genuine and authentic, by their chronological accuracy, and consistency with each other through all the lines collateral as well as direct, a consistency not to be accounted for on the supposition of their being fabricated in a subsequent age of darkness and ignorance, but easily explained if we admit them to have been drawn from the source of real family records and truth. So much of the Irish history as relates to the names and succession of their princes will certainly stand against every reasonable objection to its credibility, whatever suspicion of error, or even fiction, may lie against other circumstances contained in it.

As to the high antiquity and long duration of the Milesian Dynasty in Ireland, I can discern nothing incredible in the account of it. It is natural to suppose that at what time soever

this Spanish or Celtiberian colony took possession of Ireland its leader became king; and when we consider the remoteness of this island from foreign invasion, we shall think it less wonderful that its succession should have continued unchanged through such a long line of Milesian princes. The same circumstance in the annals of China does not shock our belief, and we account for it from the same cause, viz. its being separated from all connexion with the rest of the world, which preserved it until the Tartar invasion from those revolutions which have so frequently changed the government of other countries. And, to come nearer home for an example, the Scottish line, still happily reigning in Great Britain, tracing it no higher than to its unquestioned ancestor Fergus the Second, is at this day not less antient than the line of the Milesians in Ireland was, at the period down to which the written antiquities of that country, still extant, are carried.

I SHALL not here enter into a discussion concerning the most antient and authentic annals of Ireland, said to have been framed under the sanction of public authority from time to time, 'till the invasion of the Danes: those valuable monuments have perished long since; but, as I before observed, even in those more recent compilations which now remain, we find none of those palpable contradictions in different historians, none of those uncertainties and variations in the names and order of their kings, which appear in the histories of the darker ages of other nations, where fiction or tradition has supplied the want of authentic materials. A general agreement appears in the names and lineage of that long series of princes that succeeded and descended from
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the first conqueror down to the fifth century; and the descent of the collateral branches is traced up to the royal stem with such precision and consistency, as shews it to have been once a matter of public concern. The later bards and sennachies could not have fabricated tables that should have stood the test of critical examination as these will do; from whence I infer that they have been a true transcript from antient records then extant, but since destroyed. I am ready, however, to admit that the history of the transactions of those times is mixed with the fictions of later ages, and less to be depended on, as we have at this day no fixed criterion to distinguish falsehood from truth; it is therefore neither to be received nor rejected in the gross, but to be read with a sceptical caution, and to be admitted only so far as it is consistent with probability, with the testimony of cotemporary historians, and with itself. So far, and no farther, I shall therefore have recourse to its authority on the present question. Granting therefore, as I have before observed, that the antient inhabitants of Ireland might have come from the adjacent coasts of Britain, and were not extirpated, but only subdued by the Milesian invaders, it is very probable that the intercourse between the natives of Caledonia, and those of the province of Ulster (which took its rise from their original connexion and vicinity) might have continued to subsist, notwithstanding their having afterwards become absolutely distinct nations in a political sense. This intercourse would have much increased, and the alliance been farther cemented, when it became their mutual interest to join their forces against the Romans: The Caledonians to preserve their liberty, and the Irish to keep the enemy from attacking their's; which they were in

no danger of 'till after Britain was totally subdued. There is a passage in Tacitus which strongly confirms this conjecture ; where speaking of the utility of an expedition against Ireland, with respect to the security of the Roman conquests in Britain, he adds, among other motives, "*Ut Libertas tanquam e Conspectu tolleretur.*" "To take away that hankering after freedom which the sight of a free ally so near at hand would naturally excite." This hint gives the reader to understand that Agricola had already suffered some inconvenience from this connexion of interests, and was desirous of putting an end to it, if possible, for ever. This expedition never took place, because that general had work enough cut out for him by the valour of the Caledonians under Galgacus, without crossing the sea in search of a new enemy ; and his return to Italy a short time after, and the same cause continuing, prevented the design from being ever resumed. But the increasing intercourse and alliance between the two nations at that period, for the above reasons, in all probability opened the way to that settlement under Carbic Riada, which, according to the Irish accounts, was effected in the West of Scotland about the middle of the second century : When the antient posterity of the Caledonians, under a Milesian leader, returned to their original country, with the new appellation of Dalriadans, where the devastations of a long war that had lasted near a century had made ample room for their reception, without inconvenience to the remaining natives, and where they, most probably, were received with open arms.

THIS

THIS migration of an Irish colony under the command of Riada appears to have been effected about the year 150; and whatever private families might have settled there before (which is not denied) this is the first colony of which we have any distinct account in the Irish historians; and here they have been so particular as to name some of the other chiefs who accompanied him, and got the principal possessions in the country. This Riada is said to have been the son of Conaire the Second, monarch of Ireland; and that he is the same with the Rheuda of venerable Bede, appears from the Irish writers, who constantly give the colony the name of Dalriadans, whom Bede calls Dalrheudini, until the time of Niall Niagallach, who sent fresh colonies of Irish Scots into Caledonia after their dispersion by Maximus; and from thenceforth we hear no more of them in the Irish accounts by their old name, but they are by common consent called Scots. This alteration is observable from about the year 390, which answers nearly to the first accounts we have of them under the name of Scots, in the writers of other nations.

THIS I take to be a probable and defensible account of the rise of this third nation (as Bede calls it) and its admittance into Caledonia; which at the same time that it is consistent with the supposition of Ireland's being originally peopled from the adjacent parts of Britain (which the later Scottish antiquarians so stiffly contend for) is also agreeable to the hypothesis of the Milesian settlement in Ireland and the succession of their kings according to Irish history; and conformable to the account given
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by cotemporary writers, as well as all the Scottish historians 'till the present century. The first passage that I shall quote in support of this system is from Buchanan ; not that the antiquity of this elegant writer, gives him any right to priority, but chiefly because the passage I refer to reaches still farther back than the present question, and expresses his opinion of the veracity of the Irish accounts of their own origin in better terms than I can substitute in their place.

AFTER declaring his belief of a colony from Spain having fought and established a settlement in Ireland, as being the only country near them where they could effect it, and the most favourable to their idle disposition from the richness of its soil, where they might indulge a pastoral life without the toils of agriculture, he proceeds “ Sed nec gentis cujusque de
 “ suis majoribus opinionem quæ verisimilibus conjecturis inni-
 “ titur, & testimonio vetusto confirmatur, repudiandum ex-
 “ istimo. Nam C. Tacitus occidentale latus Britanniae, Sive
 “ Albii, a posteris Hispanorum coli, certâ, ut ipsi videtur,
 “ conjecturâ affirmat: Verisimile autem non est, Hispanos, re-
 “ lictâ a Tergo Hiberniâ, Terrâ propiore, et Cæli & Soli mitio-
 “ ris, in Albium primum descendisse; sed in Hiberniam ap-
 “ pulisse, atque Inde, in Britanniam colonos missos; *quod et*
 “ *Scotis contigisse, omnes eorum annales affirmant*, et Beda Libro
 “ primo testatur. Scoti enim, omnes Hiberniæ habitatores initio
 “ vocabantur; ut indicat Orosius; nec *Semel* Scotorum ex Hi-
 “ berniâ transitum in Albium factum *Nostri Annales* referunt,
 “ sed primum duce Fergusio Ferchardi filio, deinde, post
 aliquot

“ aliquot ætates in Hiberniam rediisse, atque denuo duce
 “ Rheutharo in Britanniam reverbos. Post, etiam, regnante
 “ Fergusio Secundo, magna auxilia Scotorum Hibernicorum
 “ missa quibus fedes in Gallovidia sunt datæ.” *Buch. Lib. 2.*

JOHN MAJOR, a more antient writer than Buchanan, admits the first settlement of the Scots in Britain to have been under Rheuda, but is guilty of so many anachronisms in his account as not to deserve a quotation from him 'till he comes to their dispersion by Maximus, which he thus relates: “ Anno ab Orbe
 “ redempto 396, tempore Honorii & Arcadii Imperatorum, in
 “ Britanniam Scoti dispersi redierunt, postquam quadraginta
 “ tribus Annis exularant: & hoc partim Pictorum invocatione,
 “ qui Britonum tributis attædiati suas terras pro magna parte
 “ Pictorum opere receperunt & fædus novum omni odio deposito
 “ Scoti cum Pictis renovarunt; verbi Sallustiani memores, con-
 “ cordia parvæ res crescunt, discordiâ maximæ dilabuntur.”

GEOFFRY of Monmouth, a writer of the eleventh century, thus speaks of the return of the Scots after Maximus left Britain (whom he calls Maximianus): “ nefandi Pictorum & Hunno-
 “ rum duces Guanius et Melga qui partibus Gratiani & Valenti-
 “ niani favebant, cum didicissent Insulam Britanniae ab omni
 “ armato milite vacuatam, iter festinatum versus Illam duxe-
 “ runt, affociatisque sibi *collateralibus Insulis*, in Albaniam appli-
 “ cuerunt: agmine igitur facto invaserunt regnum quod rec-
 “ tore et defensore carebat, vulgus irrationabile cædentes; ad-
 “ duxerat enim secum Maximianus omnes bellicosos juvenes

(E)

“ qui

“ qui reperiri potuerunt, inermesque colonos, atque inconsultos
 “ reliquerat. Cum igitur tanta calamitas Maximiano nun-
 “ tiata fuisset, misit Gratianum municipem cum duobus Legionibus,
 “ qui ut in insulam venerunt præliati sunt cum prædictis hos-
 “ tibus, et acerrimo nece affectos ipsos in Hiberniam fugaverunt.
 “ Interea Maximianus Romæ interfectus est, & Gratianus cæpit
 “ Regni Diadema, exin tantam tyrannidem in Populum exer-
 “ cuit, ut catervis factis irruerunt in illum plebani, & interfe-
 “ cerunt. Quod cum per cætera regna divulgatum fuisset,
 “ reversi sunt prædicti hostes ex Hiberniâ, & secum *Scotos*,
 “ Norwegenses, & Dacos conducentes, regnum a mari usque ad
 “ mare, ferro & Flammâ affecerunt. *Erat autem Albania peni-*
 “ *tus, frequentatione barbarorum, vastata. & Quicunque hostes su-*
 “ *perveniebant, opportunum intra ipsam habebant receptaculum.*”
 Geoff. Mon. Hist. Brit. Lib. 5th, Cap. ult.

I SHOULD not quote Geoffry of Monmouth as a writer of much authority, if the history he refers to was then a matter of very high antiquity ; but as the event he relates was at a period not very distant from his own times, I think he deserves attention. We do not reject the testimony of the Roman historians for the expulsion of the Tarquins and the establishment of the commonwealth, though we may give little credit to the tale of Æneas, which yet, for any thing that now appears to the contrary, is as well supported by antient records as the other. But, as they lived nearer the latter period than the former, we suppose them better supported in the matter of fact. The account however of Geoffry is partly confirmed by Fabius Athelwerdus,

werdus, a Saxon writer who flourished two centuries before. I have not had an opportunity of consulting him, but he is thus quoted by Usher, *Eccles. Brit. Primord.* “ Habitante plebe
 “ britannicâ incuriosè, causa firmitatis intra fossam quæ a Severo
 “ Cæsare condita erat, insurrexerunt *gentes* duæ Picti Scilicet ab
 “ *aquilonali* plagâ, Scoti, ab *occidentali* contra eos, vastantes eo-
 “ rum possessiones.” Now no nation of Scots could come upon
 the Britons from the west of Severus’s wall except those from
 Ireland, and the first colony of Scots had fled back thither after
 their defeat by the Romans. This brings our accounts of the
 Irish invasion of Britain still nearer the time when it is said to
 have happened. But to put the truth of this piece of history
 beyond all exception, we have the testimony of a writer still
 more antient, and that is Gildas the Briton, who may be esteemed
 almost a cotemporary with the calamity that he relates. These
 are his words. “ Exin Britannia omni armato milite, militari-
 “ bus copiis, rectoribus (licet immanibus) ingenti iuventute
 “ spoliata, quæ comitata vestigia supradicti tyranni (*Maximi*
 “ *Scilicet*) domum nusquam rediit ultra, et omnis belli usus
 “ penitus ignara, duabus gentibus transmarinis, Scotorum a
 “ *Circio*, Pictorum ab *Aquilone* calcabilis, multos strepet gemitque
 “ annos.” These appear to have been the commotions to which
 Claudian refers in his poem in Laudem Stilichonis, as they
 lasted for a considerable time, and were not concluded ’till the
 total defeat and dissipation of the Scots by Gratianus Municeps.
 Which Fordun, the most antient of the Scottish historians, places
 about the year 360, in the reign of Eugenius. “ His diebus
 “ in bello rex Scotorum Eugenius cecidit cum filio, multique

“ cum illis Principes & Reguli. Reliqui, relictis prædiis, Hosti-
 “ bus Servire nolentes, eligerunt potius in terram alienam velut
 “ advenæ degentes, quam propriâ subditi servire continuâ fer-
 “ vitude : Ethac quoque Regis frater cum Filio Suo Erth, aliis
 “ que pluribus Hiberniam petiit. Infulas itaque quidam petentes
 “ per omne tempus excidii latebant, præter quas omne regnum
 “ circa annum 360 amiserunt.”

HERE then we see the Scottish Dynasty completely expelled from Britain, and dispersed, some into Ireland from whence they came, and some to other nations. Their return into Britain was about forty years after. John Major places it thirty-six years, though he is too inaccurate to be depended on. “ Anno
 “ ab orbe redempto 396 tempore Arcadii et Honorii Impera-
 “ torum Scotos dispersos in Britanniam rediisse constat,” &c.

FROM a comparison of all these accounts, however they may differ in lesser circumstances, these facts are to be collected :— That a colony of Scots from Ireland had settled in Caledonia ; that they had given umbrage to the Romans in Britain, by their hostilities against the province in conjunction with the Irish, the Picts, and other nations. That they were attacked by the Romans, defeated, and forced to abandon Britain. That on Maximus leaving Britain without defence they took advantage of his absence, and made fresh attempts to reinstate themselves. That they were again chastised by Gratianus Municeps ; but on his being assassinated, they returned in full force, with the assistance of the Irish and Picts, laid waste and occupied the country from
 sea

sea to sea (which possibly was no more than from the Clyde to the Forth). And lastly, that they established themselves in Scotland about the year 396.

LET us now see how all this agrees with the Irish histories of those times. It appears by the Irish chronicles, now extant, that Niall Niagallach, monarch of all Ireland, began his reign in 373, and reigned twenty-seven years. This prince is one of the greatest heroes of the Irish, and his exploits in Britain are particularly extolled; in one of which expeditions the celebrated St. Patrick is said to have been carried prisoner into Ireland. He was the first (as they assert) that gave the name of Scotia to the country possessed by the Irish colonies in Britain. They name also a general of the Dalriads who assisted him with his forces at the latter end of his reign, but no king of that country is mentioned 'till Fergus the son of Earca; who, according to them, first established the independent kingdom of the Scots. Now the return of the Scots into Britain is placed by their own writers anno 396, which was about four years before the death of this monarch. So that these relations agree sufficiently with the Irish accounts to render both very admissible; and to mitigate the ridicule which a late Scottish antiquarian is pleased to throw upon the imaginary exploits of the redoubtable Niall: Since almost the whole of that period, wherein we read that the Romans, Britons, Huns, Picts, Scots and Irish were engaged in a bloody war, was during the reign of this prince; during which, in the alliance of these barbarous nations against the Romans and Britons, the Irish seem to have taken the lead, not only by affording an asylum to a distressed people after their defeat, but by assisting afterwards to restore them

them by an offensive war with an enemy who had never attacked their country; so that we must consider them as aggressors in the quarrel.

THE author of the Introduction to the History of the antient Scots and Irish, challenges the abettors of the old system to shew a period at which the Irish could possibly have settled themselves in such numbers as to have formed an independent state among the brave Caledonians, who would soon have sent them back to their own country with disgrace if they had made such an attempt. If his reading had been equal to his invention and ingenuity he might easily have discovered it: It was, "*Cum Albania penitus frequentatione barbarorum vastata erat, et quicunque hostes Superveniebant, opportunum intra ipsam habebant receptaculum.*"

TOWARDS the middle of the ensuing century we have an account of another migration of Scots into Britain, and more settlements obtained there by the Irish natives. This was at the time when Britain was totally abdicated by the Romans, and of course a fair opportunity offered to a needy enemy to invade, plunder and conquer with little resistance. Gildas describes this invasion and the cause of it in the following words: "*Romanis ad suos remeantibus, emergunt certatim de curucis quibus sunt trans scythicam vallem evecti, tetri Scotorum Piclorumque greges, moribus ex parte diffidentes, et unâ eademque Sanguinis fundendi aviditate concordes.—Cognitaque conditorum reversione et reditus denegatione, solito confidentiores, omnem aquilonalem extremamque terræ partem Pro Indigenis muro tenus capeffunt.*" Bede speaks of the same event in terms not very different: "*Anno Theodosii octavo*
" *recedente*

“ recedente a Britannia romano exercitu, cognita, Scoti & Picti
 “ reditus denegatione, redeunt ipsi, et totam ab aquilone infu-
 “ lam *Pro Indigenis* muro tenus capeffunt.”

HERE then is a full confutation of the new Scottish Archæologia, that the Scots are the posterity of the true Caledonians. Gildas writes of his own times, and consequently his authority is irrefragable. Who were the Indigenæ of the Pars Aquilonalis of Britain Muro Tenus, but the Caledonians? If the Scots and Picts seized on the possession of that part *Pro Indigenis*, they could not have been Indigenæ themselves, but a foreign nation or nations; consequently neither of them of Caledonian extraction.

WE now see the whole portion of Britain, at this day called Scotland, in full possession of the Scots and Picts for the first time; for though both these nations had got footing there some ages before, and been very troublesome neighbours to the natives as well as to the Romans, it does not appear that they possessed a sufficient portion of this country to deserve the name of a kingdom 'till this period; but all Caledonia being now divided between them, we may from hence date the commencement of their respective Dynasties, which subsisted independent of each other, 'till the Scots swallowed up all in the reign of Kenneth the Second.

FROM this time the Scots appear to have continued not long without an established monarch, but to have invited from Ireland Fergus, the son of Arcath, or Erk according to the Scottish writers,

writers, or Earca according to the Irish. Upon this head there is a considerable difference between the historians of the two nations; the first say that Arcath or Erk was the father of Fergus; the second assert that Earca was his mother, and the daughter of a Scottish chieftain. In this point I am rather inclined to be guided by the opinion of the Irish; because the Scots have no historians extant, of any thing near the like antiquity with the Irish; besides its carrying a great probability with it from other circumstances that attend it. This Earca, the daughter of the afore said Scot, is said by the Irish to have been married to Muirdeach, king of Ireland. The eldest son succeeded his father, and stands in the list of kings by the name of Murtoth *Mc. Earca*. Now it is highly probable that, if the Scots thought proper to send for a king, as their own historians assert, they would prefer a prince, the son of a king who was also descended in a right line from one of their own chiefs, to any other person not so highly born. But since the elder brother was already heir apparent to a more valuable and antient kingdom, it is natural that their choice should fall upon the second son if the eldest declined it. The Irish historians farther assert, that his father made him on that occasion a present of the famous Liah Fail or Stone of Destiny, on which the pagan Irish kings were used to be crowned; which continued to be appropriated to that use in Scotland 'till it was carried to Westminster by Edward the First, where it now remains. This account is also more consistent with probability than the Scottish legend, of its having been brought from Ireland by one Fergus the First, a monarch of their own country, and more antient by near eight centuries than the other. In the days of Paganism no Irish king would have parted
with

with such a mysterious relique ; but as Ireland was then just become Christian, we may suppose that it was little esteemed ; though Fergus the Second might think it would be of use to him to give his new subjects a superstitious veneration for his person and family, and prevent them from attempting to shake a throne thus established by fate itself.